

I strongly oppose any actions by the FCC to change broadcast ownership rules in any way that would tend to increase media concentration. I think it would have been best for the FCC to honor Commissioner Copps request for a delay of the June 2 consideration of these rules. But having elected to proceed, on the grounds that the review is already overdue, I would urge the FCC NOT to adopt any substantive rule changes that could increase concentration. In my local media market (the L.A. Basin) we have seen increased concentration reduce the diversity of our broadcast media. Even worse, we increasingly see programming that appears to be driven by tie-ins with corporate owners or siblings. This programming has been to the detriment of what already is poor performance in covering local news. Part of that is structural -- although the basin has a population larger than many states, the broadcast television coverage emanates from stations in Los Angeles -- with correspondingly weak coverage of news from Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, and Ventura counties, or even outlying areas of Los Angeles county. Cable providers have not filled in the gap. Public television has to a small extent (there is more than one PBS station), but it provides a bandaid. The independent stations are no longer independent, but part of the newer networks, again to the detriment of their news and public affairs programming. This media market needs more diversity and more variety in ownership, not less.

I have found in talking to my colleagues (professors of various social sciences at a campus of the University of California) that only a handful were aware of the rule changes that you were considering. I myself only learned of them in the last two weeks. I urge you NOT to facilitate the spread of media concentration.